

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced the release of \$5.1 billion in federal energy assistance, included in recently passed legislation he supported, to help seniors and working families with home heating costs this winter.

“This assistance will help hard-working local families and seniors, already struggling to make ends meet, stay warm this winter as home heating costs continue to rise,” **Arcuri said**. “I’ve made it a top priority to provide families with relief from high energy costs – working in Congress to increase this critical investment in energy relief so seniors and working families can keep the heat on this winter. This, along with steps Congress has already taken to lower energy costs, will go a long way to help area families in the coming months.”

President Bush released over \$530 million in home heating assistance for families in New York for Fiscal Year 2009. This winter, Americans using heating oil will pay more than \$2,300 per family. Since 2001, home heating expenditures, on average, have more than doubled.

The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009 (H.R. 2638), which Arcuri supported and the President signed into law, included \$5.1 Billion for the Low-Income Home Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This marked the first time the Congress has ever fully funded the LIHEAP program.

The recently enacted spending law will provide to an additional 2 million households and increase the average LIHEAP grant from \$355 to \$550. For the first time, the law also required the President to release all LIHEAP funding for the Fiscal Year within thirty days of signing the measure into law. Normally, the President has the discretion to release LIHEAP funds to states periodically throughout the fiscal year, according to need. This year, with American families heading into the winter heating season facing soaring energy prices, Congress required the President to release the full amount of available funds to states as quickly as possible.

In response to rising home heating costs and the energy crisis, Arcuri and other members of the bipartisan Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition, sent a letter to the President in July asking him to release the \$120 million in remaining Fiscal Year 2008 LIHEAP funds. In September, President Bush responded and released over \$12 million in LIHEAP contingency funds to help families in New York facing record breaking home heating bills. All together, New York received approximately \$360 million in LIHEAP funds last Fiscal Year.

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